

## Golden 961

### Chapter 961 Madness (Part 3)

Since the spiritual energy appeared in Zhuang Rui's eyes, it seemed to be invariably effective in treating human injuries. Even on a ninety-year-old like Ouyang Gang, it could slow down the aging of his organs. However, this time, it seemed to have lost its effectiveness.

Although Zhuang Rui poured all his spiritual energy into Old Wu's body, who was lying on the ground, he sensed that the spiritual energy was not absorbed by Old Wu. In other words, the person on the ground was probably no longer a living being.

"Excuse me, excuse me..."

"Don't push, the doctor's here, let them in quickly..."

Someone had somehow summoned the doctor from the jade trading center. A path was cleared through the crowd, and the person, whose medical license was unclear, placed a diagnostic instrument on Old Wu's chest.

After a minute or so, the doctor slowly shook his head, took the diagnostic instrument off his ear, and said in English, "He has stopped breathing and is dead!"

The Fujian native who was with Lao Wu couldn't understand English. Only after someone translated for him did an incredulous look appear on his face, and he shouted, "No...impossible! Lao Wu just...just..."

Just thinking about how Lao Wu had fainted, Lao Li grabbed his hair, squatted down, and could be seen from his trembling shoulders that this hearty man was crying.

"This gentleman likely died suddenly from a myocardial infarction. Further diagnosis is needed to determine the exact cause of death..."

The doctor shook his head, stood up, gently patted Old Li's shoulder, and said, "Please accept my condolences. The weather is too hot. We need to decide on the funeral arrangements as soon as possible..."

After hearing the translation from those around him, Lao Li looked somewhat bewildered. He and Lao Wu had been friends for over twenty years, and it was Lao Li who introduced Lao Wu to the world of jade gambling.

Old Li never imagined that Old Wu would spend the last part of his life in the jade gambling market.

"how so?"

"Yes, how could he possibly die?"

"It's all because of this weather. The outdoor temperature is probably over forty degrees Celsius. Even a healthy person couldn't stand it..."

The doctor's diagnosis caused a stir in the venue, and more people rushed to the entrance, soon crowding it so much that soldiers had to be deployed to maintain order.

It took a full half hour before Old Wu's body was taken away by ambulance, accompanied by Old Li, who looked grief-stricken.

Although Lao Wu's death greatly shocked the merchants who participated in the auction, life must go on, and the auction will not stop because of it; it just casts a shadow over people's hearts.

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"Sigh, I never expected something like this to happen..."

At noon, Zhuang Rui hosted Tang Lao and his entourage at Hu Rong's manor. However, after Lao Wu's sudden death at noon, no one had much of an appetite, and they found it difficult to swallow the dishes on the table.

"I saw that Xiao Wu this morning. He didn't look too good, I never expected..."

Old Tang was also very heavy-hearted. He had been gambling on stones for decades and had seen all kinds of joys and sorrows in life, but this was the first time he had died suddenly in a stone gambling market.

Only after hearing this did Zhuang Rui learn that after Lao Wu woke up from his unconsciousness, he immediately went back to selecting raw jade stones under the scorching sun. When he was about to go back for lunch and rest at noon, he collapsed at the entrance of the jade trading center.

"Insane! Insane jade gambling!"

Zhuang Rui shook his head with a wry smile. Any industry that can bring huge profits will drive people crazy.

The number of participants at each jade auction has increased from only seven or eight hundred to a thousand in previous years to almost four thousand now, which is enough to illustrate the frenzy surrounding jade gambling.

And in this process, countless people have been eliminated, and countless others have been left penniless and desperate.

"The entry barrier is low, so many people dare to try their luck as long as they have money, relying entirely on chance, and in the end they all end up empty-handed..."

Mr. Tang was also deeply moved. He had been in the jade industry for more than half a century and had seen all kinds of jade gambling occasions. There were countless examples of people who went from being penniless to becoming a billionaire and then going from being a billionaire to losing everything.

"Alright, let's not talk about this anymore. Mr. Tang, what are your thoughts on this public auction?"

Although Zhuang Rui and Tang Lao were known as the "Jade Kings" of the North and South, Zhuang Rui knew his own limitations. When it came to the real skills of identifying jade, he was simply no match for them.

"There are more stones, more people, and more money, but jade... is becoming scarce..."

Old Tang's words may sound simple at first glance, but upon closer reflection, they make perfect sense; though the words may be rough, the principle is sound.

This public auction features over 500,000 pieces of jadeite rough stones through both open and closed auctions. The number of participants is the highest in its history, and the estimated transaction amount will exceed 10 billion RMB.

However, based on Zhuang Rui's observations this morning, the quality of the jadeite rough stones at this auction was much worse than the last one he attended. He couldn't find even a single piece of jadeite of icy quality or higher all morning.

Due to the sudden death at noon, the meal ended up being rather unappetizing. After lunch and a short rest, Zhuang Rui and the others returned to the Myanmar National Jade Exchange Center.

The number of people who came to the jade trading center in the afternoon exceeded the number in the morning. This is because many people arrived in Myanmar that day and were unable to attend the trade fair in the morning.

The events of noon seemed to have no effect on these people. Walking through the crowded venue, one could see people everywhere with faces flushed red from the sun, but with expressions of fervor.

Having a large group has its advantages. Apart from those who had met Zhuang Rui a few years ago, many people didn't know who this young man wandering around the bidding area was, which saved Zhuang Rui a lot of trouble dealing with people.

At 3:30 p.m., the bidding process was the same as it had been a few years ago. However, Zhuang Rui, sitting in the bidding hall, was not as excited as he had been last time.

"Damn it, isn't this a scam?"

Looking at the constantly changing numbers on the screen, Zhuang Rui was dumbfounded. It was as if those broken stones could be transformed into imperial green jadeite. The price was rising like a rocket, and it was too outrageous.

Take, for example, the piece of icy jade that Zhuang Rui had his eye on. It only had a slight vein of veins on the surface and some misty strands, so its appearance wasn't very good. The starting bid was 30,000 euros, which was already quite high.

But as soon as the bidding started, someone raised the price to 700,000 euros. Before Zhuang Rui could even react, the price climbed to 1.2 million euros, which is a staggering 10 million yuan.

Looking at the price, Zhuang Rui was speechless. The icy jadeite inside could only be used to make one bracelet at most, and it would never sell for such a high price.

Now Zhuang Rui has a better understanding of why the jade market is so hot. Just think about it, those raw stone merchants spend tens of millions of yuan to buy materials worth millions of yuan, and they still try to manipulate the price of the finished products.

Ultimately, the cost is borne by the consumer, and there will be instances of inferior goods being passed off as superior ones and counterfeit goods being sold as genuine.

However, if this continues in the long run, the lack of market regulation will only lead to consumer distrust and affect the entire jewelry sales market.

"Damn, do they all have X-ray vision and know there's something inside these rough stones?"

As the open bidding proceeded, Zhuang Rui became increasingly frustrated because the prices of the thirty-odd rough stones he had his eye on were almost all beyond his budget.

Even for materials with poor external performance, the price was two or three times higher than the base price. This made Zhuang Rui hold the bidding device for a long time, but he couldn't enter a single price.

"Damn it, they've all gone mad, they don't value money at all?"

Zhuang Rui came to Myanmar with a full 200 million euros, but if things continue at this pace, he will probably spend almost all of it after the two-week open bidding process.

In the end, Zhuang Rui shook his head and did not bid on any of the materials. He believed that after the frenzy of the first day, those who had lost money gambling would become more restrained, and it would not be too late for him to make a move then. After all, there was nothing particularly noteworthy about the materials today.

"Laugh now, but you'll be crying later..."

Before the bidding was over, Zhuang Rui got up and walked outside. Watching the successful bidders happily pay and pick up their goods, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but secretly grumble to himself.

After calling Qin Haoran and learning that his father-in-law was still selecting materials for the sealed bid, Zhuang Rui called out to Peng Fei and Li Zhen and left the trading center. Whether it was psychological or not, the events of noon left Zhuang Rui feeling somewhat depressed.

Because it gets dark later in the summer, the jade center closes at 8 p.m. Zhuang Rui was already waiting at the entrance at 6 p.m., and people coming in and out would glance at him.

"Let's go, let's go take a look at the stone-cutting area..."

Zhuang Rui felt very uncomfortable being stared at, so he immediately walked towards the stone-cutting area on the right side of the jade trading center.

People who gamble on jade in Myanmar can be roughly divided into three categories. The first category is jewelers who buy raw stones for their own use. These people usually bring the raw stones they buy back to their home countries to hoard or cut them open, and generally do not cut the stones in Myanmar.

The second type of people are raw stone merchants who transport raw stones from Myanmar to various public auctions in China and make a profit from the price difference. They are commonly known as middlemen. They rarely participate in the cutting of stones, at most making a small cut on the better-looking stones.

The third type of people are professional jade gamblers. After purchasing rough stones at public auctions, they often cut the stones on the spot and sell the jadeite rough stones that have won the gamble to jewelers to make a profit.

The stone-cutting area at the jade center is mainly prepared for this type of person, and on-site stone cutting also helps to increase the transaction volume of the public auction.

You know, if a piece of jade with a huge potential value is found on the spot, it can definitely cause a surge of adrenaline and drive people crazy.

Chapter 962 A Mere Empty Reputation? (Part 1)

More than an hour has passed since the open bidding began, and a group of people have gathered in the stone-cutting area. These are people who have already won their bids, paid, and received their rough stones, and are now trying their luck here.

Besides these professional jade gamblers, there are also some jewelers who are extremely shrewd. They don't want to waste money participating in jade gambling, so they wait here and offer to buy jade after others have cut it open.

Although this approach is not as profitable as gambling on rough stones, it is more reliable and much cheaper than buying ready-made stones domestically.

Because these people are eager to sell their winnings to raise funds so they can buy more raw stones, the selling price after the stones are cut open on-site is usually not very high.

"Brother Zhuang, why are you out so early? Didn't you make a move this time?"

As soon as Zhuang Rui approached the stone-cutting area, he saw a familiar face: Mr. Han, the owner of Han's Jewelry. The man was wearing an exotic sun hat, and his clothes were soaked with sweat.

"Mr. Han, aren't you just strolling around too?"

Zhuang Rui laughed when he heard this. Judging from Lao Han's posture, he probably wanted to pick up a bargain and buy a few pieces of clear jade. There are many people like him in the jade-cutting area who want to take advantage of others.

"Brother, don't laugh at me. Why would I buy a plane ticket and wander around this godforsaken place? Of course, I'm looking for some good quality stuff..."

Han Haowei gave a wry smile and continued, "I just went to the open bidding. This isn't gambling on stones; it's practically robbery! They're throwing away those broken stones like they're free. I can't afford to play this game anymore..."

In business, cost control is crucial. Not only Mr. Han, but many jewelers who participated in this public auction were also taken aback by the open bidding on the first day.

The influx of idle domestic funds and speculative capital has made the jade gambling market increasingly frenzied and irrational. With Myanmar stirring things up, the domestic jade market will be greatly affected in the next few years.

"Yeah, I didn't dare to bid either. A piece of jade the size of a fist costs over two million, and even if it turns out to be icy jade, we'd still lose money. I really don't know what these people are thinking..."

Zhuang Rui shook his head repeatedly. After the bidding process, his interest in this public auction had waned significantly. Unlike these jewelers who relied on public auctions to source their goods, Zhuang Rui had a strong foothold in Myanmar.

Although the jade mine in Hpakant is going to be sold, it has accumulated a lot of good material over the years. According to Hu Rong, even if half of the raw stones in his warehouse were given to Zhuang Rui, it would be enough for his jewelry store to use for jade materials for fifty years.

So Zhuang Rui wasn't in a hurry. If he could find a good piece of material by chance, that would be great. If he couldn't find a bargain, he would just consider it a vacation.

"That person is the Jade King of the North?"

"It seems so, I heard the surname is Zhuang..."

"Is he that young? He didn't even win the bid, so he must be bragging, right?"

"Bragging? You try bragging about a piece of jade worth hundreds of millions. Let me tell you, this young man was quite the celebrity a few years ago..."

"It was just good luck; anyone would have made money in those years..."

While Zhuang Rui and Han Haowei were chatting, a group of people nearby who were about to have their stones cut started whispering among themselves. If Zhuang Rui had once created a legend in the jade gambling circle, he would be a person with a certain status in the industry.

Although many in the industry question Zhuang Rui's jade appraisal and gambling skills, his reputation precedes him, and based on his achievements in the past few years alone, Zhuang Rui has a certain influence in this circle.

As Zhuang Rui was talking to Boss Han, someone approached and said, "Are you Teacher Zhuang? Could you take a look and tell me what you think of this piece of material?"

"And you are?"

Zhuang Rui doesn't have the same high moral character as Old Tang, who helps everyone he meets to take a look. This job of taking a look is not easy. If you do it well, people will believe you. If you do it poorly, you may incur people's resentment.

Last year, Zhuang Rui helped Gu Yun's friend appraise an item, a piece of blue and white porcelain, marked as "Made in the Qianlong period of the Great Qing Dynasty". →

According to the man, this item was passed down from his ancestors during the Qing Dynasty. However, Zhuang Rui knew it was a fake as soon as he touched it. According to the rules of the trade, he was too embarrassed to say it was fake at the time and just said that he didn't understand it.

Who knew that as soon as that guy stepped out, he started spouting nonsense at Gu Yun, saying that Zhuang Rui was all talk and no action, which caused Gu Yun to fall out with that guy and lose his friend.

After that incident, Zhuang Rui never appraised items for idle people again, except in the antique circle. Doing so would only cause him trouble.

"Brother, this is Boss Zhang. He's been a leading figure in the jade gambling market for the past few years. He has a sharp eye and is very daring. His reputation is no less than yours back then..."

Before the man could speak, Han Haowei preemptively introduced himself to Zhuang Rui, causing Zhuang Rui to frown slightly. "Why are you comparing yourself to yourself? I don't make a living from this."

"Mr. Zhang, please don't bother with my appraisal. My reputation is just hype; it's not to be taken seriously..."

With Zhuang Rui's current wealth and perspective, he was too lazy to care about such things, so he displayed a maturity far beyond his years in his speech.

"How could that be? Teacher Zhuang's reputation is known even to foreigners. Could it be that he doesn't think much of my talent?"

Mr. Zhang has been doing very well in the jade gambling business these past two years, and has indeed cut out several good stones. He is often praised by well-known domestic jewelers, and he thinks that his level of appreciating raw stones is among the best in the industry.

However, since he entered the industry late, Mr. Zhang had never met Zhuang Rui before. But he often heard people talking about Zhuang Rui's achievements, and he couldn't help but feel a little unconvinced. Now that he had asked Zhuang Rui to take a look, he actually wanted to examine Zhuang Rui's abilities.

This isn't a dramatic story. There are some people in this world who can't stand others being better than them. In ancient times, this would be called "there's no first place in literature, but there's no second place in martial arts." They love to take everything seriously.

Upon hearing this man's words, Zhuang Rui frowned slightly and said, "Let's forget about it. The world of jade gambling is ever-changing. Before it's cut open, no one can say what's inside..."

"Ah? Haha, since Teacher Zhuang can't see through it, then forget it..."

When Boss Zhang heard Zhuang Rui back down, his pride soared. He chuckled and didn't press Zhuang Rui any further.

Zhuang Rui didn't want to cause trouble and refused, but this made Boss Han resentful. Just as Boss Zhang finished speaking, Boss Han said, "Boss Zhang, what do you mean by 'can't see through it'? Let me tell you, there aren't many rough stones that Brother Zhuang can't see through. When it comes to appraising rough stones, hehe, Boss Zhang, you..."

Han Haowei only said half of what he meant, but everyone could understand what he meant. Boss Zhang's smiling face instantly turned ugly.

"Huh, that's strange. Teacher Zhuang didn't say anything, so why are Old Han and Old Zhang arguing?"

"Yeah, Lao Han isn't usually this serious, is he?"

"Old Zhang is going a bit too far. If you want to climb the ladder, you shouldn't step on other people..."

Han Haowei's attitude struck the onlookers as odd. Jewelry dealers and jade gamblers are usually interdependent, and logically speaking, Han Haowei had no reason to offend Boss Zhang.

What these people didn't know was that Zhuang Rui had done Han Haowei a great favor some time ago. Those few pieces of top-quality jadeite were enough to ensure that his jewelry store wouldn't have to worry about the raw materials for top-grade jadeite ornaments for several years.

Aside from Qin Haoran, Fatty Ma, Song Jun, and other family and friends, Boss Han probably knows Zhuang Rui's skill level best. So, his act of standing up for Zhuang Rui at this critical moment is undoubtedly aimed at befriendng Zhuang Rui and obtaining some good materials from him in the future.

"Old Han, what are you saying..." Zhuang Rui quickly stopped Han Haowei. He didn't have high expectations for this public auction and didn't want to stand out anymore.

Before Zhuang Rui could finish persuading Lao Han, Boss Zhang said sarcastically from the side, "Teacher Zhuang, please take a look, otherwise people might say you're all talk and no action..."

"Damn, are you sick in the head? Why are you biting people like a mad dog? What did I do to you, buddy?"

Zhuang Rui was furious. How could there still be people like this these days? Do they really think they're the God of Gamblers?

Zhuang Rui wanted to keep a low profile, but he couldn't tolerate being trampled on. So he said, "Alright, let's see. Boss Zhang's skill level must be very high, so the rough stones he chose must be excellent..."

Upon hearing that Zhuang Rui was going to help Boss Zhang appraise the material, some people who were cutting stones put down what they were doing and came over. Even some people who were waiting at the entrance of the jade center gathered around.

It's worth noting that the miracle Zhuang Rui created on this site a few years ago is still being talked about today.

Zhuang Rui walked to a stone cutting machine and saw the material that Boss Zhang had bought. It was a large piece of material, about one meter in length and width, and weighed at least 300 kilograms. It also had blemishes on the surface and looked very good.

Zhuang Rui circled the rough stone twice, smiled, and asked, "Mr. Zhang, this piece of material must be quite expensive, right?"

Before Boss Zhang could speak, a fellow straight man chimed in, saying, "Of course! This piece of jade was today's top bid, sold for 6.8 million euros. Only Brother Zhang has that kind of guts!"

"Courage?!"

Zhuang Rui chuckled inwardly, "This is what you call guts? It's more like idiocy..."

"Hmm, Mr. Zhang really has guts. This piece of jade is extremely unlucky; most people wouldn't dare to gamble on it..."

As Zhuang Rui spoke, he squatted down, took the magnifying glass handed to him by Boss Han, and pretended to examine the surface of the raw stone.

"You mean the crack? The crack in this piece isn't deep, and the surface blemishes are very green. I'm sure you'll see green when you cut it open, so I don't think the quality will be bad..."

Mr. Zhang looked very confident. He had bought a piece of jade at the Yangmei auction that looked very similar to this one. After his gamble paid off, he made more than 20 million RMB by reselling it.

Chapter 963 A Mere Empty Reputation? (Part Two)

There are many tricks to gambling on rough jade. Some people like to gamble on color, some on texture and clarity, and some on cracks. Each person chooses the timing of their purchase and the type of rough jade based on their own experience.

However, among these gambling methods, gambling on cracks is undoubtedly the riskiest. As the saying goes, "one cut to heaven, one cut to hell," which describes gambling on cracks in jadeite rough. The rough cut from this method will either result in a huge profit or a complete loss, making it the riskiest.

Generally, it is the old-timers who have been in the jade gambling scene for decades who are extremely cautious when gambling on cracks. Zhuang Rui didn't know why this person in front of him, who was only a few years older than him, was so confident.

“Mr. Zhang is right, this piece of material... ah, not bad, not bad...”

Zhuang Rui did not refute Mr. Zhang's words, but instead laughed it off. However, from his casual words, everyone could tell that Zhuang Rui did not seem to think much of this priceless rough stone.

The presence of green inclusions within the rough stone only indicates that the material may contain jadeite. However, due to the unique formation conditions of jadeite, the underlying structure can vary greatly, and the appearance of the outer skin can only serve as a reference at best.

A true expert in jade gambling would never rashly make a move simply because something looks good on the surface.

Zhuang Rui had already examined the material with his spiritual energy. This rough stone, weighing six or seven hundred pounds, did indeed contain jadeite, and just as Mr. Zhang had said, the quality was quite good, reaching the icy variety. It was just a pity that there was only a small piece of it under the crack.

There's a saying in the jade gambling industry: "Better to cut a line than a whole piece." A line of green that appears after cutting is called "ribbon green" by insiders. It's a three-dimensional shape that penetrates into the stone, and its thickness is unknown.

After being cut, it reveals a patch of green, which is called "skin green" in the trade. As the name suggests, the thickness of skin green is generally not very deep, which is why there is a saying in the industry: "It's better to cut a line than a whole patch."

Although this piece of material contains jadeite, it's only a small piece. According to Zhuang Rui's estimate, it's worth at most six or seven million. This person spent a sky-high price of sixty or seventy million to buy it, and even dared to have it cut open on the spot. He'll be crying later. 6999.

Zhuang Rui's joking remark was clear to everyone: Boss Zhang had intended to provoke Zhuang Rui's reputation, so he said, "Boss Zhuang doesn't think much of my talent?"

"No, no, Mr. Zhang has excellent judgment..."

Zhuang Rui felt a bit annoyed. "I've already stopped arguing with you, why do you keep picking on me?" He turned to Han Haowei and whispered, "Bro, who's this guy?"

"Damn, he's a complete idiot. I heard he used to deal in tea, I don't know how he got into the jade gambling circle. But he's been lucky, I don't think I've ever heard of him cutting something that turned out badly..."

After listening to Han Haowei's introduction, Zhuang Rui learned that this Mr. Zhang's name was Zhang Yunhui, and he was from Meizhou, Guangdong. He used to make his fortune by dealing in tea, but business had become difficult in recent years, so he turned his attention to jadeite gambling.

Although gambling on jadeite is most popular in Guangdong, Zhang Yunhui got involved relatively late, only starting to get into the jadeite rough stone business around 2006.

Zhang Yunhui is incredibly daring. After learning the ins and outs of jade gambling, he almost always aims for cracks in the stones whenever he makes a bet.

Generally, materials with a high gamble risk tend to have relatively low prices, but if the gamble pays off, the profits can be quite high, potentially ten or even a hundred times the initial investment.

Mr. Zhang was very lucky; he rarely lost big bets and reaped considerable profits over two years, amassing a fortune of over 100 million.

Once a person's career is going smoothly, their ambitions rise. After two years of struggling in China, Zhang Yunhui set his sights on the Myanmar jade auction.

It's important to know that the rough stones available for gambling at major domestic auctions, aside from those smuggled in, are almost entirely secondhand. In terms of both price and quality, they are far inferior to those at Myanmar auctions.

Mr. Zhang felt that his experience and skills were enough to make him a force to be reckoned with in the international jadeite rough market, so he came to participate in the Myanmar jadeite auction for two reasons: first, to gain fame, and second, to make money.

"Damn it, what does his pursuit of fame have to do with me? Why is he targeting me?"

Zhuang Rui was somewhat frustrated. He had gone overseas to salvage a shipwreck, but first he encountered pirates, and then, to make matters worse, a bunch of people came to steal the spoils from the shipwreck. Now, even participating in a jade auction, he was being used as a stepping stone.

The truth is simple: these days, fame and money are synonymous.

Putting everything else aside, if Zhuang Rui were to cut a stone, as long as the green color is revealed through the window or the cut surface, someone would definitely buy it at a high price, because Zhuang Rui's past track record is enough to convince people of his judgment.

Zhang Yunhui can only sell rough stones at a high price if he sees a confirmed jadeite, so reputation is also very important in the jade gambling industry.

Take Sister Furong, who became famous online for her quirky antics in the past two years, for example. Didn't she gain fame first and then profit? She struck a few S-shaped poses, which drew a lot of criticism online, but businesses immediately rushed to have her pose as their male models. It's the same principle.

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"Mr. Zhang, get started. If you can find some good material, I'll buy it right away..."

"Old Zhao, even if there are good materials, it's not your turn. Can't you see how many people are gathered here?"

"Boss Zhang, hurry up and cut the stone, it's getting dark soon, don't dawdle..."

The people gathered around the stone-cutting area were either gambling on stones for profit like Zhang Yunhui, or jewelers. They watched Zhang Yunhui and Zhuang Rui chattering for a long time without actually cutting the stones, and they couldn't help but get impatient, so they started making noise.

"Right away, right away, I was just asking Teacher Zhuang for advice, wasn't I?"

However, Teacher Zhuang doesn't think highly of this piece of material. Whether this rough stone is just all talk or has real quality, we'll find out once we cut it open..."

Zhang Yunhui spoke very loudly, as if afraid that the onlookers wouldn't hear him, and his words implied that Zhuang Rui was all talk and no action, saying that he was all talk and no action.

"Old Zhang went a bit too far with his words..."

"That's right, Teacher Zhuang won every bet back then, his reputation wasn't just for show..."

"It's hard to say. A few years ago there were many good stones, but now the skill of gambling on stones is more important..."

"Exactly, maybe that guy surnamed Zhuang just got lucky. Otherwise, why haven't we seen him make a move these past few years?"

These words sparked a flurry of discussion among the surrounding people. By now, everyone could see that Boss Zhang and Zhuang Rui were actually competing with each other.

However, the crowd was divided into two groups. One group had seen Zhuang Rui gamble on stones before and had great confidence in him, while the other group had only recently entered the stone gambling circle and expressed doubts about Zhuang Rui's skill level.

"Hehe, since Mr. Zhang asked me to say a few words, then I'll give my assessment of this piece of material..."

Although Zhuang Rui didn't care about this empty title, he was still a little annoyed by Zhang Yunhui's repeated provocations. After hearing other people's comments, he finally couldn't hold back anymore. If these comments reached Old Master Gu's ears, who knew how the old man would punish him.

Zhang Yunhui had previously seen Zhuang Rui repeatedly back down, and assumed he was just a person with a reputation but no substance. He was taken aback when Zhuang Rui actually offered to comment on his rough jade piece. He then said, "Alright, it's a rare treat to have Teacher Zhuang here. I'm all ears!"

Zhang Yunhui was quite confident in his ability to gamble on cracks in the stone. He did nothing all day but stay by this rough stone, and after various observations, he finally won the bid for it at a high price of 60 to 70 million RMB.

People who have made their fortunes in traditional businesses tend to have a strong sense of self-confidence, and Zhang Yunhui's success in the jade gambling market over the past two years has only fueled his confidence.

Mr. Zhang firmly believed that green would definitely appear under this crack. As long as the green was found, such a large piece of material could earn him at least 30 million. In just one day, he could make a profit of 30 million. No other business could earn that much.

Now that Zhuang Rui is willing to give his comments, he couldn't be happier. He can gain both fame and fortune. Boss Zhang is probably secretly laughing to himself right now.

"The outer skin of this piece looks good. Judging from the python pattern and these moss-like bands, there should be jadeite inside..."

"Professor Zhuang, we know all that, but let's have a different perspective..."

"Yes, let's talk about the cracks. Nine out of ten cracks lead to collapse. Is this piece the same?"

Zhuang Rui had only said a few words when he was interrupted by the people present. This was not the year when Zhuang Rui once dominated the jade gambling industry. He had been away from this circle for a long time, and to some extent, people had some doubts about Zhuang Rui.

"Alright, let's talk about the cracks..."

Zhuang Rui nodded and continued, "The crack on this rough stone isn't deep, but it's quite long. Although you can see green where the crack goes, based on my personal experience, it's inevitable that there will be green underneath. It's just unlikely to form a continuous line; it's probably just a patch of green, not worth the price Mr. Zhang paid..."

Zhuang Rui's words have basically revealed the situation of the rough stone. The truth will be revealed when the stone is cut later. As for the reason, he also said that it is "experience".

Given Zhuang Rui's influence in the jade gambling circle, if he's right, he'll definitely be adored by everyone, and no one will question why he's so accurate.

However, Zhuang Rui's words stirred up a hornet's nest. The onlookers began to whisper among themselves. If Zhuang Rui was right, he could naturally dispel the doubts about his undeserved reputation, but if he was wrong, his reputation would be completely ruined.

"Hmph, you'll know once it's untied..."

As the owner of the stone, Zhang Yunhui naturally didn't care about Zhuang Rui's words. He immediately called a few people to lift the raw stone onto the stone-cutting machine.

Chapter 964 A Mere Empty Reputation? (Part 3)

Seeing Zhang Yunhui moving the rough stones, Han Haowei whispered to Zhuang Rui, "Brother, are you confident? This Zhang kid has been quite lucky. In the past two years in the jade gambling circle, he doesn't seem to have lost much money..."

Although I can't stand Zhang Yunhui's arrogant attitude, I can't deny that he is really good at gambling on jade. His past achievements speak for themselves, and he has unearthed several good pieces of jadeite.

Gambling on stones is just like fighting a war; it's all about winning or losing, and the outcome is decided in one fell swoop. There's no way to fake it, so Han Haowei was a little worried for Zhuang Rui. If he said something wrong, all his previous reputation would be ruined.

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui gave a wry smile and said, "Brother Han, even a god can't judge a piece of jade by its appearance. No one can say for sure whether they're confident or not. But if it turns out to be green, please don't bid..."

Cutting stones also requires skill. If Zhang Yunhui is skilled enough, he should be able to cut to the surface of the jade. If he can stop and sell it directly, he won't lose money, and might even make a small profit.

But if Zhang Yunhui is greedy and wants to keep cutting, then today will be his Waterloo in the jade gambling market, and even a god couldn't save him.

"Mr. Zhang, if you find any green ones later, consider selling them to me first!"

"Highest bidder wins, Lao Zhao, what are you doing getting involved..."

"Alright, stop talking, let's watch Old Zhang cut the stone..."

Zhang Yunhui has been in the jade gambling circle for two years and has some fans. Of course, most people are interested in the jade after it has been cut, so they try to get close to him.

For jewelers who are unwilling to take the risk of gambling on rough stones, buying raw jade or cutting open ordinary jade is the most cost-effective option. Therefore, these people usually maintain good relationships with people like Zhang Yunhui.

Zhang Yunhui had already had the rough stone loaded onto the stone-cutting machine and was pacing back and forth, observing the direction of the cracks. Although he had just made boastful remarks, he was extremely cautious, examining the cracks almost inch by inch with a magnifying glass.

Cutting jade is a very meticulous and technical task that requires a keen eye. A piece of top-quality jade will often see its price plummet after it is cut badly. For example, if a piece of jade that could have been made into a bracelet is cut into a cabochon instead, its value will naturally be much lower.

Similarly, even if there isn't much jade in this rough stone, as long as you can cut it precisely and bring out its best aspects, even if you only cut half of it open, people will still rush to buy it.

It was already past 7 p.m., and more and more people were coming out of the jade trading center and gathering in the jade cutting area. The originally sparse crowd was now surrounded by three concentric circles.

It's well known that cutting stones is always the most exciting thing. Even if you're not the one doing it, you can't help but feel excited and thrilled when you see a piece of green jade.

Above the stone cutter, a high-wattage light bulb lit up, illuminating the surroundings in minute detail. Zhang Yunhui, who had been observing for almost 20 minutes, finally gripped the handle of the stone cutter.

"Click...click click..."

The huge gears of the stone cutter began to turn, their bright, sharp surfaces reflecting the light from above like mirrors, creating a beautiful sight.

Hearing that familiar sound, Zhuang Rui was somewhat lost in thought. This scene seemed so familiar to him. Not long ago, it was amidst this "click-click" sound that Zhuang Rui earned his first real pot of gold.

"Damn it, I'm definitely going to bid on a piece of this tomorrow and cut it open for fun..."

At this moment, Zhuang Rui seemed to have returned to the Pingzhou public auction years ago, and the exhilarating feeling of winning after betting big seemed to return to him.

"It went up, the betting went up, now it's turning green..."

Suddenly, a gasp came from beside him, interrupting Zhuang Rui's recollection. Looking closely, he saw a small cut surface at the very edge of the crack, and on that cut surface, a vibrant green hue appeared.

"Teacher Mao, what kind of water is it?"

"Yes, Teacher Mao, take a look! It's only cut this little bit and it's already showing green. This piece is going to be a huge investment..."

After the green color was extracted, someone immediately went to the stone-cutting machine to observe the grade of the jadeite, while Zhang Yunhui turned off the stone-cutting machine and stood to the side with a smug look on his face.

"It's icy jade, high-grade icy jade, only slightly inferior to glassy jade. Mr. Zhang has a good eye..."

Zhuang Rui also knows this Teacher Mao. He is a teacher at Yunnan Geological College. He is not very good at gambling on stones, but he is an authoritative expert when it comes to appreciating jadeite.

He is often invited to appraise jade at various public auctions, but this time it was unclear which boss invited him, so as soon as Teacher Mao spoke, the audience immediately started to clamor.

The first stone cut open on the first day was a high-grade icy jade, which immediately made everyone eager to try it.

It should be noted that in recent years, jadeite rough from old mines has almost become extinct, and the material from new mines cannot compare with that from old mines in terms of both texture and clarity.

Therefore, whenever icy jadeite appears on the market, it will attract a lot of jewelers to compete for it, not to mention that this piece of jadeite is of high icy quality, and its price is several times higher than that of ordinary icy jadeite.

Immediately, the onlookers began to whisper among themselves, and some even asked to come forward to examine the cut surface in order to make their later bids.

"You've got some skill; that cut is right on the jadeite surface..."

Zhuang Rui was close by and immediately saw the cut surface. He sighed inwardly, realizing he had underestimated everyone else. No one else had the keen eye he possessed, and the stone he had cut was flawless.

You know, if you cut it in the middle, you won't even see the green part. You'll have to cut the whole piece of jade in half, and you'll be lucky to sell it for six or seven million RMB.

However, Zhang Yunhui only cut off a piece of scrap weighing about 30 kilograms, and it turned out to be green. In most people's minds, if this green were to extend inward by just one or two fingers, its value would far exceed his winning bid.

"Impressive, Mr. Zhang. I'll offer seven million euros for this piece of material, what do you say?"

"Old Zhao, you're talking nonsense. Someone else bought it for 6.8 million euros, and you think you can just add 200,000 and take it? There's no such thing as a free lunch."

"That's right, Lao Zhang, we've known each other for a long time. Give me some face, how about seven and a half million euros?"

"Seven million eight hundred thousand euros. Look at this water. If we just let a finger or two's width seep in, and then pull out some other material, we'll make a guaranteed profit. I'll offer seven million eight hundred thousand euros..."

About twenty minutes later, more than a dozen jewelers from China had examined the cut surface, and some couldn't help but start quoting prices. In today's world where jade resources are becoming increasingly scarce, icy jade is already something that many merchants are vying for.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this piece of material has only had such a small section cut open, yet it has yielded such high-quality jadeite. I think everyone should be well aware of its value, right?"

After hearing everyone's bids, Zhang Yunhui finally spoke. In his mind, the bottom line for this rough stone was that it would have to sell for at least 10 million euros, which is 100 million RMB, before he would consider making a move.

However, after Zhang Yunhui said this, the scene fell silent. Everyone knew that adding another hundred thousand euros would probably not be enough to acquire this piece of material. They all weighed the options in their minds and began preparing for the next round of bidding.

"Brother, is this material really all green? How could he cut it so accurately?"

Seeing the heated bidding, Han Haowei was also tempted. As a businessman, he naturally wanted to make a move when he saw good raw materials. However, after hearing Zhuang Rui's words, he hesitated.

At this moment, Boss Han was unsure whether to believe Zhuang Rui's words, the scene before him, or his own judgment.

"Old Han, I've made myself clear. Believe it or not, it's up to you. Just don't blame me if you suffer losses after taking the picture..."

Zhuang Rui and Han Haowei had a good relationship; otherwise, he wouldn't have sold those top-quality jadeite pieces to him recently. So he gave him a hint, and as for Han Haowei's choice, Zhuang Rui couldn't force him.

Whether it was the heat or nervousness, Mr. Han's forehead was covered in fine sweat. After staring at the slice of meat that shimmered with a greenish hue under the light for a while, he gritted his teeth and said, "Brother, I believe you!"

Inside the stone-cutting yard, not only were the buyers tense, but the sellers were also on edge, ready to speak at any moment. Zhang Yunhui appeared calm, but his heart was actually churning, wishing that a buyer would offer a high price so he could quickly sell the jade.

From the current perspective, the jade has already been a winning bet. For Zhang Yunhui, who makes money by gambling on jade, the most important thing is to cash it out, because this one piece of jade alone has tied up almost half of his wealth.

Based on just this small cross-section, no one dared to bid high, and there was a moment of awkward silence. Zhang Yunhui gradually felt the pressure and kept searching the crowd with his eyes.

"Um?"

Zhang Yunhui suddenly saw Zhuang Rui, smiled, and said, "Teacher Zhuang, you must have misjudged him today. The material has already been cut open. How about... you take another look?"

Zhang Yunhui was not a magnanimous person. He was still holding a grudge about Zhuang Rui's comments earlier. Facts speak louder than words, and now that he had won the bet, he wanted to embarrass Zhuang Rui.

"Let me give my opinion?"

Zhuang Rui looked at Zhang Yunhui with a half-smile and said, "I'll say it again, this piece of material is all green, the jade underneath definitely won't be deep. Why don't you cut it open again and let me see?"

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, the jewelers who had been hesitating about whether to ask for a high price were stunned. It seemed... that was indeed a possibility!

Chapter 965 Riding a Tiger, Now or Never

"Am I fucking a smart aleck?!"

After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Boss Zhang felt so uncomfortable he almost vomited blood. He had originally hoped to hear Zhuang Rui say something conciliatory, but the guy insisted on his own opinion, making the noodles somewhat useless.

It should be noted that Zhuang Rui initially stated that this rough stone was a patch of green. Now that one side has been cut open, revealing a palm-sized cut, it is indeed a patch of green, not a line of green. Therefore, it cannot be said that Zhuang Rui was wrong.

But this single patch of green can have a huge impact on the rough stone. If Zhuang Rui's prediction is correct, the price of this rough stone could immediately drop from seven million euros to seven million RMB, or even less.

The jewelers present were all shrewd and calculating. Even though they were optimistic about the material, Zhuang Rui's words could bring down the price, so they all shut their mouths and no one offered a price anymore.

Even if Zhang Yunhui makes another cut and proves Zhuang Rui wrong, it won't be a big loss for these jewelers. At most, the price will increase a bit, but it will prevent them from realizing that the material is entirely green.

Zhuang Rui hadn't intended to argue with this man, but the man's persistent pressure had finally gotten to him. Even after years of self-cultivation, Zhuang Rui was now agitated. Seeing Zhang Yunhui remain silent, he spoke up, "What's wrong, Mr. Zhang? If we cut it another slice, and we can see the green inside, the price could double..."

Zhuang Rui's words actually contained a hidden danger. If a cut can reveal green, it can indeed cause the price to skyrocket. However, if it cannot reveal green, then it will result in a complete loss with no chance of recovery.

"this....."

Upon hearing this, Zhang Yunhui hesitated. He hadn't expected that his momentary impulse would lead him into such a dilemma, leaving him undecided whether to cut or not.

Zhang Yunhui was actually confident he could make another cut, but to be on the safe side, since he was already making a profit, there was no need to take the risk. After all, in the jade gambling world, countless people have ruined their chances with the second cut.

Honestly, Mr. Zhang didn't want to cut it again. The problem was that Zhuang Rui had said beforehand that the raw stone was entirely green, and the current situation after cutting it out was indeed similar to what Zhuang Rui had described.

The crowd was so excited about winning the bet that they forgot about this, but Zhuang Rui brought it up again, so it has to be taken seriously.

"Mr. Zhao, I'm in the jade gambling business. Now that the price has gone up, there's no need to cut any further. What do you think of this piece? If you like it, I'll sell it to you for eight million euros..."

After much deliberation, Zhang Yunhui still couldn't bring himself to cut his losses again. Earning a little less was fine, but losing money would be devastating, as over six million euros represented most of his fortune.

As Boss Zhang spoke, he glanced at Zhuang Rui and was immediately filled with anger. Zhuang Rui had already shut up and was acting as if what was happening in the room had nothing to do with him.

From Zhuang Rui's perspective, this matter had nothing to do with him. Whether Zhang Yunhui made a profit or a loss, Zhuang Rui would not lose or gain a single penny. If this guy hadn't provoked him several times, Zhuang Rui wouldn't have bothered to say such offensive things.

"Ahem, Lao Zhang, I think... you should just make another cut. No matter where you cut, as long as it still yields green, I'll offer a price and buy this piece of jade!"

Old Zhao, whose name was called, held up one finger. Although he spoke very boldly, he was politely declining Zhang Yunhui's offer. Zhang was very frustrated and cursed inwardly, "Damn it, if there were any more green ones, you think you can buy them for 100 million? Do you think I'm stupid?"

If Zhuang Rui hadn't said those words, this piece of jade would be worth over 100 million RMB based on its current performance. If it turns green again, the price would multiply.

"Alright, since Teacher Zhuang has said so, I'll make another cut!"

Zhang Yunhui waited for a long time, but no one offered a price. Frustrated, he started circling the rough stone again. He needed to choose another spot to make his cut; this cut was even more crucial than the first one, and he couldn't afford to be careless.

"Those who reap what they sow will not live!"

Zhuang Rui shook his head and muttered to himself, "We had no grudges against each other. You can just gamble on your stones. Why did you have to drag me into this? Let's see if you'll get so angry you'll vomit blood later."

"Make way, Old Tang is coming..."

"Who? Old Tang? Isn't that two generations of jade kings going together?"

"You bet, there's going to be a good show later..."

Just as Zhang Yunhui was examining the rough stones, the crowd behind Zhuang Rui parted to make way for Qin Haoran and Old Tang, who had apparently bumped into each other sometime earlier. They walked in chatting and laughing.

"Zhuang Rui, I couldn't find you anywhere. What are you doing here looking at stone cutting?"

Qin Haoran walked into the crowd and immediately spotted Zhuang Rui. He quickly greeted him and then asked, "So, did you find any good materials?"

Qin Haoran is also in the business of finished jewelry. If there are good raw materials, he doesn't mind participating in the bidding.

Zhuang Rui shook his head and said honestly, "No, I'm not too optimistic about this piece of material. I'm just waiting for Boss Zhang to make the second cut..."

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Qin Haoran immediately lowered his voice and said, "You brat, how can you talk like that? You're just offending people."

Qin Haoran was well aware of Zhuang Rui's reputation in the jade gambling circle. Although it was not as prestigious as that of Old Tang beside him, a single word from Zhuang Rui could still influence many people.

"Dad, it's not that I wanted to say it, it's that others forced me to say it..." Zhuang Rui smiled bitterly upon hearing this. This guy was getting shot even when he was standing still.

Zhuang Rui doesn't object to Zhang Yunhui wanting to rise to power, but if Zhang Yunhui wants to climb over Zhuang Rui's shoulders to get there, then sorry, Zhuang Rui's manners haven't reached the point where he can turn the other cheek after being slapped on the left.

"I see... Well, this isn't your fault. What young person doesn't have a temper? If you want to provoke others, you need to have the strength to back it up!"

After hearing Zhuang Rui recount the events, Qin Haoran naturally supported his son-in-law. However, he changed the subject and lowered his voice to ask, "Are you sure it's a patch of green?"

Zhuang Rui smiled and said, "Dad, although I haven't looked at rough stones for almost two years, my feeling is right, it's definitely all green..."

Upon hearing this, Qin Haoran was overjoyed and said, "Alright, if you still have the time, go and select some jadeite for me tomorrow. Once you sell your jadeite mine, we'll be cut off from our supply..."

After spending a day selecting rough stones, Qin Haoran was also a bit troubled. The price of the raw stones had almost quadrupled compared to the previous public auction, making him hesitant and afraid to make a move.

"Mr. Tang, could you please take a look at this piece of material and tell me where I should start cutting?"

Not to mention the whispered discussion between Zhuang Rui and his son-in-law, Zhang Yunhui, upon seeing Old Tang enter, rushed forward as if he had seen a savior, inviting Old Tang to the stone-cutting machine, hoping he could take a look.

Unlike his provocation of Zhuang Rui, this time Zhang Yunhui was truly sincere. No matter how arrogant he was, he dared not underestimate this old "Jade King" who had a huge reputation in the jade gambling industry.

Furthermore, Zhang Yunhui is now in a bit of a dilemma, because after looking at several cutting points, he is not confident that he can cut out the green, and he also wants to ask Tang Lao for some guidance.

"Okay, then I'll take a look..."

In the industry, Old Tang is known for his willingness to help others. Whenever someone asks him to look at materials, even if they are complete strangers, Old Tang will lend a hand. Right now, he put on his reading glasses and took out a powerful flashlight to examine the materials.

Instead of examining the cut surface first, Old Tang started by looking at the fissure with discolored spots, and he examined it very slowly, observing almost every inch of it for a long time.

While Mr. Tang was examining the rough stone, the room was completely silent. No one spoke or discussed anything at that moment. The jewelers had already made up their minds that if Mr. Tang said the stone was good, they would make a move to buy it before even making a second cut.

This is the benefit that fame can bring. Although Zhuang Rui has been in the industry for several years and has cut out many classic top-quality materials, in terms of experience, he is far inferior to Old Master Tang.

At least when Zhuang Rui said the material was bad, everyone was still ambiguous and remained on the sidelines. But if Old Tang said "good," then at least half of the onlookers would make a move.

More than half an hour passed before Mr. Tang finally put down the magnifying glass, took off his glasses, and wiped away his sweat expressionlessly.

"Mr. Tang...Mr. Tang, how is your diagnosis going?"

For Zhang Yunhui, the success or failure of this jadeite has a huge impact on both his financial and reputational standing.

Therefore, at this moment, Boss Zhang no longer had the smugness and arrogance he had shown when speaking to Zhuang Rui. When he asked Old Tang, his voice was already trembling.

"I'm not quite sure. This piece of jade has a rather long and shallow crack, and it also has some discoloration. Logically speaking, it should be possible to cut out a line of green, but since you cut out a patch of green, it's hard to say..."

Tang Lao's words immediately caused a stir among the onlookers, and their gazes toward Zhuang Rui were completely different from before.

Old Tang was unaware that Zhuang Rui had previously commented on this rough jade. What he was saying now was based on his own observations. Although he didn't make any definitive statements, his views were very similar to Zhuang Rui's.

Upon hearing Tang Lao's words, Zhang Yunhui's face turned somewhat pale, and he pressed for an answer: "Tang...Tang Lao, if we were to make another cut, where would be the best place to start?"

"Hmm? Why do you still need to cut it? If you weren't using it yourself, this piece of material would already be ready to be sold..."

Old Tang was a little puzzled by Zhang Yunhui's question. He knew Zhang Yunhui, and since he wasn't a jeweler, why would he take the risk of cutting again? Hadn't he won the bet now?

"This...this..."

Mr. Zhang stammered and couldn't speak. At this moment, he wished he could slap himself hard. Wasn't this just shooting himself in the foot?

Chapter 966 Gambling Failure (Part 1)

"Mr. Tang, could you please take a look?"

Boss Zhang's face showed a pleading expression. He was embarrassed to mention that he had just provoked Zhuang Rui, and now he could only hope that Old Tang could give him some pointers so that the second cut wouldn't be a disaster.

"Xiao Zhang, are you really going to make another cut?"

Old Tang was taken aback when he heard this. He had already made himself very clear. He didn't understand why Zhang Yunhui insisted on making another cut. However, he was always very good-natured, so he nodded, put his reading glasses back on, and continued to examine the crack.

"It seems that the young man had some merit..."

"Nonsense, back when Teacher Zhuang was a big shot in the jade gambling world, this guy surnamed Zhang was nowhere to be found."

"That's right, challenging Teacher Zhuang, you see? You shot yourself in the foot..."

Tang Lao's remarks just now were tantamount to indirectly acknowledging Zhuang Rui's evaluation of the rough stone. In an instant, those who had previously had some doubts about Zhuang Rui's jadeite rough stone appraisal skills changed their tune and began to praise Zhuang Rui.

If we're talking about the person who's feeling the most upset right now, it has to be Boss Zhang Yunhui. He never expected that his provocative behavior would have such serious consequences. If the second cut fails, then not only will the 60 to 70 million RMB be wasted, but it will definitely be significantly reduced.

But now he was in a dilemma. If he didn't make a second cut, he was afraid that no one in the room would bid for this rough stone. Boss Zhang glanced at Zhuang Rui with a complicated look in his eyes.

Even if he wanted to blame Zhuang Rui, he couldn't. Zhuang Rui had been making concessions from the beginning, but he had taken advantage of the situation and forced Zhuang Rui to comment. Boss Zhang was in a real dilemma at that moment!

After observing for a while, Old Tang beckoned to Zhang Yunhui and said, "Young Zhang, the crack in this piece is too long, I can't see it clearly. If we want to cut it, let's make another cut from the other end. If there's no green, let's keep this piece for now..."

The risk of gambling on cracked jade is too high. Even Master Tang generally wouldn't invest in jade with cracks. Although the outer skin of this piece looks good, Master Tang isn't very optimistic about it.  
0800.00

Generally speaking, the deeper the crack, the greater the damage to the jadeite inside the rough stone. However, if the crack is too long, it indicates that the crustal movement was very irregular when the jadeite was formed, and it is very likely that the jadeite that should have been formed was weathered onto the surface.

"Alright, Mr. Tang, I'll cut it as you said..." Zhang Yunhui found a few helpers, moved the raw stone a bit, and placed the other side under the gears of the stone cutting machine.

Although Boss Zhang was arrogant, he was very clear-headed. In terms of experience and skill in gambling on stones, he was no match for Old Tang. The reason he looked down on Zhuang Rui earlier was partly due to his age.

Zhuang Rui looked to be only twenty-five or twenty-six years old. Two years ago, he would have been twenty-three or twenty-four. As someone who had just graduated from university, he was naturally not taken seriously by these seasoned businessmen.

It wasn't just Zhang Yunhui who felt this way; even those in the room who had never seen Zhuang Rui gamble on stones before shared the same thought.

It's like people going to the hospital to see a traditional Chinese medicine doctor. If the doctor is an elderly man with white hair and beard, then the patients will generally trust the doctor's skills. On the contrary, if the doctor is a young man in his twenties or thirties, then probably nine out of ten patients will leave.

There are many unscrupulous private hospitals in society nowadays that hire old men with white beards to manage them. It's not just hospitals; some temples even openly recruit abbots, requiring them to have round faces, big ears, and a blessed appearance.

Therefore, judging people by their appearance has existed since ancient times and is common in all walks of life. It is not a rule unique to the jade gambling industry.

...

After finding the right cutting point, Zhang Yunhui gripped the handle of the stone cutter with both hands, his trembling slightly. This cut would determine the value of the rough stone and, more importantly, whether his trip to Myanmar would be a profit or a loss.

"Click...click click..."

The sound of alloy gears rubbing against stone echoed throughout the stone-cutting area. White powder and stone fragments filled the air. Everyone in the area held their breath, watching Zhang Yunhui's stone-cutting movements with bated breath.

Although Mr. Zhang was nervous, his hands remained steady as he cut the stone. About three minutes later, a piece of edge material weighing more than 40 kilograms broke off from the original stone with a "snap" and fell to the ground.

"Quick, quick, check if it's turned green yet!"

"Get some water, get some water to rinse it off..."

"Make way, don't block the way, the water's coming..."

After the second cut was made, the jewelers watching were even more excited than Zhang Yunhui. Without being told, they all got busy, some fetching water, others washing things.

It's worth noting that the first cut of this piece of jade was almost flawless, except for the fact that it was entirely green. This high-quality, icy jadeite can already be considered a high-end product in the jadeite jewelry market.

If the second cut reveals green, the value of this jadeite will increase at least fivefold, because it is cut from both ends and green is visible at both ends. The possibility that the jade inside is connected cannot be ruled out, which would result in a piece of jadeite worth a fortune.

As the owner of the rough stone, Zhang Yunhui was pushed to the periphery. He was too nervous to look at it and stood to the side with a pale face, letting the jewelers do whatever they wanted.

"Tch...it's ruined..."

Suddenly, a voice came from among the people surrounding the raw stone, like a heavy hammer hitting Boss Zhang on the head, and Zhang Yunhui's vision went black for a moment.

"Move aside, let me see..."

Pushing through the crowd, Zhang Yunhui rushed to the innermost part of the area. Looking at the neatly cut surface, he saw that it was entirely composed of crystalline stone structures, without even a trace of green like the finest hair.

"It's collapsed, it's collapsed..."

Zhang Yunhui muttered to himself, then plopped down on the ground, staring at the cut surface of the rough stone, tears welling up in his eyes.

What could have been a sure-fire way to make a profit has turned into this mess because of his foul mouth and his disdain for Zhuang Rui.

Suddenly, Zhang Yunhui seemed to remember something, and he scrambled to his feet, almost rolling and crawling, to Zhuang Rui, saying, "Teacher Zhuang... could you take another look and see if it can still be cut open?"

At this point, Zhang Yunhui didn't care about saving face anymore. Face was nothing compared to money. As long as he could recover the losses, he would be willing to kowtow to Zhuang Rui even if it meant doing so.

Seeing Zhang Yunhui's pitiful state, even though he had brought it upon himself, Zhuang Rui felt a pang of sympathy and said, "Mr. Zhang, well... I can't really say..."

However, this piece of jade is quite large. Even though no green was found on one end, there's no guarantee that it won't be found elsewhere. I think you should put it away...

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Zhang Yunhui's eyes lit up immediately. He nodded and said loudly, "Yes, yes, that cut didn't even yield a fifth of the original stone. If I cut it in the middle again, I'm sure I can get some green jade..."

Zhuang Rui couldn't help but smile wryly upon hearing this. He advised Zhang Yunhui to put the stone away, thinking that once the storm had passed, it could still fetch a good price at auction in China.

It's worth noting that even if the second cut is a bad gamble, the rough stone still looks promising, and some jewelers with a high risk appetite will make offers.

But if Zhang Yunhui were to continue cutting now, that would be like an old man hanging himself... courting death. Two consecutive cuts would ruin the piece, and it would probably only fetch the price of the green part of the cut.

"Xiao Zhuang, what's going on? Did you just comment on this material?"

While Zhang Yunhui was busy moving the raw stones, someone told Old Tang what Zhuang Rui had just said. Only then did Old Tang understand why Zhang Yunhui wanted to make a second cut.

"Ahem, Mr. Tang, I was forced into this situation. This Mr. Zhang is really too much..."

Zhuang Rui shrugged helplessly. There are too many people who want to stand out but are overestimating themselves. If Boss Zhang hadn't come to provoke him, would Zhuang Rui have bothered with his business?

"Sigh, young people these days are too impetuous..."

Upon hearing this, Old Tang sighed, but his expression turned serious, and he continued, "Little Zhuang, I wasn't talking about you..."

Zhuang Rui waved his hand and laughed, "Hehe, Mr. Tang, I was just lucky, I was just talking nonsense. Please don't flatter me too much, senior..."

"Xiao Zhuang, many of my old friends have witnessed your expertise in appraising antiques. It seems you also have a deep understanding of jadeite rough stones. We must find an opportunity to discuss this further..."

Old Tang was quite curious about Zhuang Rui. Although he came from a family of jade collectors, he was also quite knowledgeable about antique collecting and foreign oil paintings, and had many friends in these fields.

When discussing collecting topics, Tang Zenan had often heard his old friends mention Zhuang Rui's name. Before this year, he always thought that Zhuang Rui was an expert in the collecting circle, and that his success in gambling on stones was just due to good luck.

However, after what just happened, Old Tang truly changed his opinion of Zhuang Rui. As the saying goes, a great reputation is not undeserved, and Zhuang Rui's level of expertise in identifying raw stones may not be inferior to his own.

"Mr. Tang, I can't accept such praise. If I have time these next few days, I'd like to learn more about jade from you..."

Zhuang Rui's gambling on stones relies entirely on his keen eye. However, when facing this veteran who has been thriving in the stone gambling circle for nearly half a century, he is not so confident.

Seeing Zhuang Rui and Old Tang exchanging compliments, Han Haowei suddenly had an idea and said, "Hey, Brother Zhuang, you and Old Tang are both top figures in our jade gambling circle. Why don't you each choose a piece and have a contest of your eyesight?"

"Old Han's idea is great!"

"Yes, two generations of jade kings gambling on rough stones at the same venue, what a great idea!"

While Zhuang Rui and Old Tang were talking, quite a few people were listening intently. As soon as Boss Han said this, some people immediately cheered.

#### Chapter 967 Gamble Fails (Part Two)

Tang Zenan's family had been in the jade and jadeite business since before the liberation, making them a veritable jadeite family. In the 1970s and 80s, Tang Zenan left his job and started his own jadeite business.

Over the decades, Tang Zenan has proven his unshakeable position in jadeite rough stone appraisal through countless gambling on stones. Before Zhuang Rui appeared, there was only one "Jadeite King" in the country, and that was Tang Zenan.

However, Zhuang Rui suddenly appeared two years ago. He first made a fortune at a jade trade fair in Nanjing by spending only a few thousand yuan and earning tens of millions of yuan, thus beginning his legendary jade gambling career.

Later, at the Pingzhou Jadeite Auction, Zhuang Rui partnered with others to win the top bid in the auction. After the stones were cut on-site, the profit exceeded 100 million yuan. It was at the Myanmar Jadeite Auction that Zhuang Rui truly shone.

At that jade auction, Zhuang Rui only cut one piece of jade, but it was that rare and top-quality red jade that forged Zhuang Rui's legendary reputation in the jade gambling industry.

Looking back at Zhuang Rui's journey in jade gambling, many people have noticed that he has never made a mistake, and every time he gambled on a piece of jadeite rough, the price soared, and the jadeite that appeared was often a rare gem that ordinary people would only see once every few decades.

Therefore, although Zhuang Rui has not been in the jade gambling circle for long, he has been given the title of "King of Jadeite" in the North by some busybodies, and this title has been accepted by many people.

Although Zhuang Rui's reputation in the jade gambling circle is slightly less than that of Tang Lao, he has a wide range of interests. He has not only made achievements in the jade industry, but also has a well-known reputation in the antique collection circle. It can be said that outside the jade gambling circle, there are definitely more people who know Zhuang Rui than people who know Tang Lao.

Han Haowei's proposal to have the two generations of "Jade Kings" compete immediately sparked a response from the crowd. This was a rare and spectacular event, and regardless of who won or lost, it would become a legendary tale in the jade gambling circle.

At that moment, everyone almost forgot that Zhang Yunhui was still cutting the stone, and they all started to clamor, hoping to bring about a showdown between Zhuang Rui and Old Tang.

"Click...click...crack!"

Suddenly, the sound of the stone-cutting machine cutting through the stone echoed throughout the area, drawing the attention of those who were discussing Zhuang Rui and Old Tang's betting match on selecting rough stones back to the raw stone.

Dust flew everywhere, and white dust filled the air, making it impossible for anyone to see the cut surface of the rough stone. After about several tens of seconds, the smooth and neat cut surface was finally revealed.

A sharp-eyed person, after clearly seeing the cross-section, immediately exclaimed: "It's a disaster, there's still no green!"

"Oh dear, thank goodness I listened to Teacher Zhuang and didn't make a move just now..."

"Yes, this material is probably all green. It's not even worth 7 million RMB, let alone 70 million..."

"Old Zhang has really lost big this time, six million eight hundred thousand euros, it's going to be a huge blow to his business..."

"Serves him right. Teacher Zhuang didn't provoke him. He tried to climb over others to get ahead. He got what he deserved..."

Among the onlookers were many knowledgeable people who were well aware of Zhang Yunhui's initial provocation of Zhuang Rui. This directly led to Zhang Yunhui facing the situation of not being able to sell his first winning bet, which was probably unprecedented in the world of jade gambling.

Mr. Zhang's face was ashen, and he no longer had the arrogance and confidence he had shown earlier. Looking at the smooth cut of the jade on the stone-cutting machine, Zhang Yunhui wished he could just crash into it.

As the saying goes, everything happens because of those who try to stand out. Zhang Yunhui originally thought Zhuang Rui was an easy target and wanted to use this opportunity to establish his position in the jade gambling circle. However, he never expected that he would end up becoming the clown himself. Not only did he end up with nothing, but he also suffered direct economic losses of tens of millions.

Mr. Zhao, who had previously made an offer, circled the rough stone a few times before unexpectedly saying, "Mr. Zhang, I'll take this piece for 20 million. What do you think?"

"Hey, Old Zhao took advantage of the chaos..."

"Yes, the material was bought for 70 million, and they want to buy it for 20 million? That's a good deal..."

"That's not necessarily true. It might not even be worth 20 million. The green part of the cut surface is worth at most seven or eight million..."

Mr. Zhang's offer stirred up the room again. Many jewelers were mentally calculating whether to bid. If the green emerald could penetrate even a finger's width deeper, a price of twenty or thirty million would be worthwhile.

"20 million? Old Zhao, that's really unfair..."

Without a second thought, Zhang Yunhui refused outright. He felt incredibly frustrated, as if his lungs were about to burst. He felt like a tiger fallen into the plains, being bullied by dogs.

From Zhuang Rui's comments to now, only an hour has passed, but the prices have changed drastically. Only now does Zhang Yunhui truly realize what the expert effect means.

Old Zhao wasn't angry. In business, maximizing profits is paramount. He smiled and said, "Old Zhang, given the quality of this piece, 20 million is already quite a lot. If the green is thin, I'd be losing money even if I spent 20 million..."

Zhang Yunhui was furious, but had nowhere to vent his anger. He waved his hand and said fiercely, "I won't sell! I won't sell! I'd rather keep it as toilet padding than sell it!"

Everyone could see that Boss Zhang had lost his composure, but his behavior was still relatively good. There are just as many people who jump off buildings after losing everything gambling on stones as those who jump off buildings after a stock market crash.

"Xiao Zhang, as the old saying goes, nine out of ten gamblers lose, and the same goes for jade gambling. No one can be a perpetual winner. Don't worry about it. If you really don't want to sell, just keep this piece for a few years..."

Old Tang was a kind man. After seeing Zhang Yunhui's condition, he went up and offered some advice. He had been in this business for too long. He had personally witnessed not only the failure of cutting up rough stones worth 60 or 70 million, but also the failure of gambling on stones worth hundreds of millions.

Zhang Yunhui said dejectedly, "Thank you, thank you, Mr. Tang, I'll listen to you..."

He originally wanted to make another cut to see what would happen, but if he did that, the whole piece of material would basically be ruined. After much consideration, Mr. Zhang accepted Mr. Tang's suggestion.

The jade market is currently experiencing a price fluctuation almost daily, with the trade in raw jade stones being particularly booming. In a few years, when the raw jade stones are almost exhausted, even the piece that Zhang Yunhui gambled on and failed will likely become a highly sought-after item.

Therefore, Zhang Yunhui understood what Tang Lao was saying very well: if he kept this piece of material, he would still have a chance to turn things around. Moreover, many large domestic companies and speculative funds were entering the industry, so he might be able to find an opportunity to swindle it away.

"Mr. Zhuang, are you free tonight? How about we grab some dinner?"

"Teacher Zhuang, it's been almost two years since we last met. How about we get together for dinner tonight?"

"Hey, I think we should all find a place to have a meal together, and maybe we can ask Professor Zhuang and Mr. Tang for some advice..."

Although the entire piece of jade couldn't be cut, Zhuang Rui's comments were all spot on. It turned out that the gamble on this rough stone was indeed a disaster. Those who had previously questioned Zhuang Rui's jade gambling skills all started trying to get on his good side.

Those who come to Myanmar to gamble on jade are basically all millionaires, and no one cares about this small amount of money. Right now, they are arguing about who should host the event.

Meanwhile, Mr. Zhang, who had just been riding high, quietly packed up the rough stone by himself, and with the help of his staff, rented a car and left. In this business, it's all about winning and losing; if you win, you're sought after, but if you lose, nobody cares.

Finally, the more than one hundred people gathered in the stone-cutting area decided to have a meal at a nearby hotel. As for who would treat them, Zhuang Rui didn't know and was vaguely dragged along.

"Brother Zhuang, so, do you agree with or disagree with the suggestion I just made?"

After sitting down at the hotel, Han Haowei hadn't forgotten his earlier suggestion. He took a sip of water to moisten his throat and brought up the topic again.

"Old Han, aren't you talking nonsense? Everyone knows Old Tang's status in the jade gambling circle. Why would a junior like me get involved..."

Zhuang Rui waved his hands repeatedly. It wasn't that he lacked confidence, but rather that he didn't want to pursue this empty fame at all. With his current wealth, he no longer needed to rely on fame to make a living.

"Xiao Zhuang, the quality of the raw materials at this auction is quite uneven, so it really requires a discerning eye. How about we each pick a piece of rough jade and give it a try?"

To Zhuang Rui's surprise, Old Tang was actually very interested in Han Haowei's suggestion. As soon as he said this, people at more than ten tables in the hotel started to make a fuss.

The fact that Tang Zenan could say such a thing is enough to show that in his mind, Zhuang Rui's level of rough stone appraisal is at least on par with his own.

Zhuang Rui is only thirty years old, yet he is so highly regarded by Elder Tang. It seems that from today onwards, Zhuang Rui will truly be known as the "Jade King" of the North.

"Brother Zhuang, didn't that old man Gu say you've lost your reputation these past two years? Why not take a gamble? Nobody's betting anyway, what's there to be afraid of?"

Just as Zhuang Rui was about to decline, Peng Fei suddenly whispered something in his ear that made Zhuang Rui pause in surprise.

"That's true. Many people in the Jade Association are questioning themselves, so this is a chance to prove themselves."

Thinking of this, Zhuang Rui smiled and looked at Old Tang, saying, "Grandpa, since you are in such a good mood, I will gladly oblige. How about this, tomorrow we each choose a piece of material and cut it open right here?"

"Good, good! Young people should be energetic, so it's settled then!" Old Tang was delighted when he heard Zhuang Rui's words.

After hearing Zhuang Rui's comments on the rough stone, Old Tang was secretly shocked. Even with his expertise, he dared not say that the stone was entirely green, yet Zhuang Rui's assessment was spot on.

Tang Zenan had never met his match in the jade gambling circle for so many years. Now, in his old age, someone with an eye for jade has appeared who is no less discerning than him. This has made the usually unassuming Old Tang excited and unable to resist testing his eye for jade with Zhuang Rui.

Chapter 968 A Gamble Beyond Jade Gambling

"Damn this weather, why is it so hot? Damn it, you want to suck my blood?"

Zhuang Rui slapped his arm, lifting it up to reveal a palm full of blood and a mosquito that, after two days in the sun, would become a specimen.

After having dinner with his colleagues at the hotel, it was already past 10 p.m. when they returned to Hu Rong's residence. September in Myanmar is not only hot, but the swarms of mosquitoes are also unbearable.

During the day, he didn't feel anything, but at night, swarms of mosquitoes roamed the entire manor like bombers. Just walking from the door into the air-conditioned room, Zhuang Rui got several bumps on his body.

"Tomorrow I'll have someone spray some pesticides and clean up the pond outside..."

Hu Rong felt a chill run down his spine at the sight. He rarely lived here, and the lack of maintenance had made the lush trees and the pond outside a perfect habitat for mosquitoes.

"You smell so good, kid. Alright, stop complaining..."

There are three small buildings in the manor. Qin Haoran called Hu Rong and Zhuang Rui to the house where he was staying.

"Dad, what's wrong? You feel all sticky, let's take a shower first..."

After entering the room, Zhuang Rui felt his clothes were almost soaked with sweat and was too embarrassed to sit on the exquisite fabric sofa.

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Qin Haoran realized he was also covered in sweat. He nodded repeatedly and said, "Yes, yes, I'll go take a shower first, and we'll talk later..."

After returning to his room and taking a cold shower, Zhuang Rui changed into a silk nightgown before going to Qin Haoran's room. He saw the uncle and nephew each eating a slice of watermelon.

"Hey, it's so refreshing to have watermelon on such a hot day..."

Zhuang Rui stepped forward, picked up a slice of chilled watermelon, and with a slurp, bit off a row of red flesh. Then, he looked at Qin Haoran with satisfaction and asked, "Dad, what's the matter that you called me and Brother Hu here so late?"

Although Zhuang Rui didn't find anything today, he was still a bit tired after looking at raw materials all day.

"It's nothing, these are just a few pieces of jade I looked at today. I'm not sure about them, could you take a look for me tomorrow?"

As Qin Haoran spoke, he handed Zhuang Rui a slip of paper. There weren't many numbers listed on it, only a dozen or so pieces of raw jadeite.

"Dad, you brought quite a few people with you, how come you only looked at a few pieces of material in one day?"

Zhuang Rui knew his father-in-law had brought six professional jadeite rough appraisers from Hong Kong, intending to stockpile more goods at this public auction.

However, the list only contained a few pieces of material, which didn't quite align with Qin Haoran's original intention of stockpiling goods in Myanmar, hence Zhuang Rui's question.

"Sigh, you should ask Hu Rong about this. The Myanmar jade auction is getting more and more outrageous. They're putting all sorts of materials on the market, and the prices are ridiculously high. How are we supposed to choose anything?"

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Qin Haoran immediately turned his attention to Hu Rong. They were close relatives, so Qin Haoran spoke very directly, complaining while smiling on the surface.

"Uncle, there's no use asking me about this. I'm not a general in the Military Commission. If the price of the raw stones is set too high, the extra money will all go to the military. It won't really benefit us much..."

Upon hearing Qin Haoran's words, Hu Rong gave a wry smile. Since last year, he had rarely sold raw jadeite at the jadeite auctions. Apart from the rough stones he smuggled to China for Zhuang Rui, he had stockpiled the rest.

Hu Rong was once investigated by the military for this, but his family was deeply rooted in the Hpakant region, where the situation was complex and the military was weak, so ordinary people could not touch him.

Seeing Qin Haoran frown, Hu Rong quickly said, "Uncle, the quality of the rough stones this time is poor, which will definitely affect the transaction volume. I'll contact a few mine owners to put some pressure on the military, and I believe the next public auction will be much better..."

In Myanmar, the military is the most powerful force, but when the local warlords unite, even the military has to bow down. Otherwise, if those local warlords don't pay some fees, Myanmar will immediately fall into chaos.

Therefore, as long as the transaction volume of this public auction is not high, and the vital interests of those mine owners who are divided in various places are affected, they will definitely demand an explanation from the Myanmar military.

"Hmm, you're right. I'm not in a hurry. You and Xiao Rui have both supplied me with a lot of goods..."

Qin Haoran nodded. He was very familiar with the situation in Myanmar. Suddenly, he turned to Zhuang Rui and asked, "Xiao Rui, although the quality of the raw materials this time was relatively poor, there were still some good ones, right? How come you didn't win a single bid today?"

Qin Haoran was well aware of his son-in-law's skill in appraising jadeite rough stones. As long as Zhuang Rui made a move, good materials could not escape his eyes. Even though in Qin Haoran's mind, Old Tang was a notch below Zhuang Rui.

"Dad, there are some nice materials, but the price..."

Zhuang Rui shook his head. He had looked at a lot of rough stones today. As long as the outer skin was even slightly better, the starting bid was astronomical. When the bidding opened in the afternoon, the price kept rising. Zhuang Rui was too lazy to bid.

Qin Haoran was taken aback by his son-in-law's words and said, "Hey, Xiao Rui, are you confused?"

"What's wrong with me? Dad, didn't you also think it's too expensive?" Zhuang Rui was a little confused. The price was indeed expensive, didn't his father-in-law just say so?

"Hey, I'm saying there are too many poor-quality materials, but if the outer layer looks good, of course it should be sold at a higher price..."

Qin Haoran knew Zhuang Rui had misunderstood him, and continued, "The price of rough stones at each Myanmar jade auction increases to varying degrees, which we can accept. What I'm talking about is that the organizers of the auction have included too many fake stones..."

Myanmar is the only country in the world that produces jadeite, and the prices of jadeite at the Myanmar jadeite auctions directly affect the jadeite market. However, this isn't the biggest issue for jewelers.

With raw materials becoming more expensive, the finished jade jewelry will naturally increase in price. Ultimately, this will only affect jade consumers, and will not have a significant impact on jewelers themselves.

Qin Haoran explained the situation to Zhuang Rui, then looked at Zhuang Rui with a strange expression and asked, "Xiao Rui, you're not still using prices from a few years ago to judge the current raw stone market, are you?"

"This...is really a bit..."

Zhuang Rui blushed immediately after being told off by his father-in-law. He hadn't paid much attention to the jade market in recent years, and even with Qin Ruilin's shop in Beijing, he only looked at the financial statements; he didn't concern himself with the actual operations.

Although Zhuang Rui had spoken with Qin Haoran after arriving in Myanmar and gained a general understanding of the current prices of jadeite rough, it was all abstract; they were just looking at the prices on paper.

Therefore, when examining the rough stones today, Zhuang Rui subconsciously used prices from a few years ago to assess their value. As a result, of course, none of the stones he examined were worth the price.

...

The next morning, after having breakfast at the manor, Zhuang Rui and his group headed to the Myanmar National Jade Exchange Center. Hu Rong also accompanied Zhuang Rui this time, as a big show was about to take place that night.

Most of the businessmen who come to Myanmar from China to participate in the jade auction stay at the same hotel where Zhuang Rui stayed last time. Moreover, these people are already familiar with each other, and once they return, the news spreads like wildfire, quickly reaching everyone.

The legendary showdown between two generations of "Jade Kings" has created a strange atmosphere in the trading venue today. Wherever Zhuang Rui goes, he can hear people discussing this matter, and those who know him nod in greeting.

As for Lao Wu, who was diagnosed with a myocardial infarction and died suddenly yesterday, and Zhang Yunhui, who lost everything gambling on stone cutting, they have all become things of the past and are no longer mentioned by anyone.

"Mr. Jin, who do you think will win this jade gambling game?"

"Hey, is that even a question? Of course it's Old Tang. His reputation over the past few decades isn't just for show..."

At the entrance of the jade trading center, two jade merchants from China chatted idly, their conversation naturally revolving around the competition between Zhuang Rui and Old Tang.

"I don't think so. Teacher Zhuang's comments yesterday were amazing. Who knows, he might beat Old Tang today..."

"Xiao Guo, don't be unconvinced. Old ginger is spicier, and in a pinch, the older generation is more trustworthy..."

Mr. Jin was a bit older, around fifty years old. He had heard the most about Mr. Tang's anecdotes about gambling on stones, and he was rather dismissive of what his friend was saying.

"I'm not convinced, Lao Jin, how about we make a bet?"

This Xiao Guo isn't actually that young; he's over forty, but in terms of temperament, he really acts like a young man. He immediately started shouting that he wanted to make a bet with Boss Jin.

"Fine, I'll bet 50,000 yuan that Old Tang will win!"

Boss Jin was not to be outdone. Old Tang's record in the jade gambling market was brilliant. He had personally cut open almost every top-quality jadeite material that could be heard of.

"Okay, fifty thousand it is. I bet on you to win, Mr. Banker!"

Mr. Guo joined the jade gambling circle a bit late, around the same time as Zhuang Rui. He even witnessed Zhuang Rui cutting open the top jadeite bid by lamplight in Pingzhou, making him a die-hard fan of Zhuang Rui.

"Hey you two, is this an off-the-books betting platform? I'd also like to bet on the banker to win, Mr. Jin, are you willing to take my case?"

The two men's sparring match at the entrance of the jade trading center attracted a crowd. Everyone has a gambling instinct, and 50,000 yuan isn't a large sum, so people were willing to take the risk. Soon, some people started to join in the fun.

Mr. Jin was quite resentful that the other man hadn't bet on Old Tang, and after being provoked by the man's words, he immediately nodded and said, "I'll accept it. It'll be one-to-one compensation. If Old Tang loses, I, Old Jin, will compensate him. But if Teacher Zhuang loses, the money is mine..."

"No problem, a bet is a bet. Don't worry, Mr. Jin, I'll write a check, okay?"

"Hey, I'm betting 100,000 on Old Tang, Lao Guo, do you dare to take it?"

Zhuang Rui has fans, but Tang Lao's fan base is even larger. As soon as someone suppressed Zhuang Rui, someone immediately emerged to oppose him.

"A flat bet of 50,000 per stone, no matter how many come, we've taken too few. Damn it, no more stone gambling today, let's give these two who're gambling on stones tonight some fun..."

Old Guo is quite a clever fellow. After seeing the enthusiasm of the crowd, he simply stopped going into the jade center to select raw materials. Instead, he asked the auction staff outside for a table and some paper and pens, and set up a stall at the entrance with Boss Jin.

The bosses who participated in the jade auction arrived at different times. When they passed by this stall, they were all very curious. For them, 50,000 yuan was just a meal or a game of mahjong. They immediately opened their wallets and joined in.

Although it was only 50,000 yuan per bet, there were so many people betting that by early morning, both sides had already accepted bets of over 10 million yuan each, which put pressure on both Mr. Jin and Mr. Guo.

Although these bets weren't all in cash—some people wrote checks, others wrote IOUs—once the outcome was decided, no one would owe the 50,000 yuan. Of course, one of the two people would inevitably have to pay it out.

The two of them had already boasted, and now they were in a difficult situation. Losing some money was not a big deal, but they couldn't lose face. They had no choice but to grit their teeth and persevere.

...

"Mr. Tang, you're here to look at materials too?"

Zhuang Rui arrived early and was unaware that a gambling den had been set up at the entrance. As soon as he entered the open bidding area, he saw Old Tang with two young men, observing the rough stones along the way. He quickly went up to greet them.

"Hehe, I'm going to have a competition with you today. How could I bring out my jade if I didn't come here?"

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Old Tang burst into laughter, making Zhuang Rui blush deeply. His question was indeed a bit foolish.

The sealed bids will only be opened in the last three days of the public auction. Tonight, Zhuang Rui and Tang Lao will each choose a stone to interpret, so of course they will come to the open bid area.

"Xiao Zhuang, there's plenty of material. We've been able to find rough stones numbered up to 30,000 all day, enough for us to choose from. We'll see who picks the better one then," Old Tang said with a smile, helping Zhuang Rui out of his predicament.

At Tang Zenan's age, money and power no longer hold any appeal for him. Only the ever-changing world of jade gambling, where the outcome is uncertain, can excite him.

However, in recent years, those involved in the jade gambling circle have mostly been throwing money at it rather than relying solely on technical expertise to make judgments, which has greatly disappointed the old man.

Now that he has seen Zhuang Rui, who is so young yet has such a keen eye, Old Tang is truly eager to compete with him. Back when Zhuang Rui was his age, he was just an ordinary staff member at the Jiangsu Provincial Geological Bureau.

Upon hearing Elder Tang's words, Zhuang Rui was also greatly encouraged and said with a smile, "Good, Elder Tang, don't let me, the younger generation, surpass the older generation!"

Having been absent from the jade gambling circle for two years, Zhuang Rui knew that many people had begun to question his ability to appraise jade. So this time, he would let the facts speak for themselves!

Chapter 969 The Jade King (Part 1)

Due to the expansion of the rough stone trading market, tens of thousands of stones are auctioned daily, providing Zhuang Rui and Tang Lao with a wide selection, thus minimizing the possibility of them competing with each other.

After saying goodbye to Mr. Tang, Zhuang Rui looked at the densely packed jadeite rough stones on the ground, thought for a moment, and then turned around and walked out of the open bidding area.

Finding the finest jadeite among these materials was no challenge for Zhuang Rui. Since he still had a day left, he wanted to go to the sealed-bid area to help his father-in-law take a look at the rough stones he had chosen yesterday.

"Peng Fei, what's wrong with these people?"

As Zhuang Rui walked from the open bidding area to the sealed bidding area, he noticed that many people were staring at him. He couldn't help but touch his face, wondering if he had something growing on his face.

"Brother Zhuang, you're handsome..."

Peng Fei laughed and joked that in Myanmar, as long as there was no conflict with the military, safety was very guaranteed, so Peng Fei and Li Zhen were both very relaxed.

"Get out of my way. Alright, you and Li Zhen can go wander around. I want to look at the raw stones..."

Zhuang Rui waved his hand dismissively, shooing Peng Fei and Li Zhen away. It just didn't feel natural for him to have two followers when he was using his spiritual energy to observe the raw stone.

Zhuang Rui took out the number given to him by his father-in-law from his pocket and began to look at it from the beginning of the marked area.

Just like the public auction he participated in before, the good rough stones were numbered very early. The first lot in the sealed bid area was an icy jade with a window cut in it.

"Oh, Teacher Zhuang is here! Everyone, make way so Teacher Zhuang can have a look..."

A crowd had already gathered in front of the No. 1 marker, but as soon as Zhuang Rui walked over, the crowd immediately made way for him. This was the kind of treatment that experts could enjoy.

"Teacher Zhuang, could you please give me some feedback?"

"Yes, this piece of material is a bit hard to see through. I don't know if I can make a sale..."

Before Zhuang Rui could even stand still, the people around him started to stir. In places like jade gambling markets, almost every piece of jade that looks promising has some "commentators" nearby, and this place was no exception.

"Let me take a look first..."

Zhuang Rui took the magnifying glass from someone without comment, and squatted down to examine the surface of the rough stone.

This piece of jade weighs about 200 kilograms and is oval in shape. The outer skin is variegated, with some black mixed in with the gray-green color. The window that was rubbed open is on the surface of the stone. Although the green color is average, the translucency is very good, and it looks bright and attractive.

"Teacher Zhuang, how is it?"

"Is it worth selling this piece of material?"

"Teacher Zhuang, please tell us about it, everyone's waiting..."

As soon as Zhuang Rui stood up, the onlookers started asking questions all at once. You know, while the experts' assessments aren't always accurate, they're definitely much more reliable than what these people are saying.

"Judging from the surface, this piece has a multicolored skin, so it should be a rough stone from the Grey Karst mine. As everyone knows, the transparency of rough stones from the Grey Karst mine varies, and the distribution of color on the bottom is not very uniform. In my personal opinion, it has a high gamble risk..."

The experience summarized by our predecessors is not without purpose. After Zhuang Rui used his spiritual energy to observe this piece of material, he found that the bright and clear surface became cloudy after seeping into the interior of the raw stone.

While there are some decent aspects to it, it's clearly disproportionate to the five million euro starting price on the sign next to it.

"Everyone, please take your time looking around. I'll go inside now..."

This piece of material was also one that Qin Haoran had asked Zhuang Rui to pay attention to. Now it could be crossed off the note. After Zhuang Rui finished his comments, he bowed to everyone and left the crowd.

Zhuang Rui's comments caused some people who were already skeptical of the material to leave, while those who remained were more confident in their own judgment. Zhuang Rui didn't care; he had already spoken, and whether they believed it or not was up to them.

"Hey, my father-in-law's taste is really not that great..."

Zhuang Rui didn't linger in front of any of the raw materials. Instead, he used his spiritual energy to examine all the dozen or so materials on the slip of paper. He couldn't help but shake his head inwardly. Qin Haoran was good at doing business, but his ability to select raw materials was really not commendable.

These dozen or so pieces are all semi-rough stones, with windows or facets cut into them. However, the quality of the jade inside is not very high. Only two pieces barely reach the icy type, while the rest are mid- to low-grade stones.

Zhuang Rui glanced at the time; the auction had only been going on for a little over an hour. He decided to wander around the sealed-bid area, constantly using his spiritual energy to sense each piece of material.

More than an hour later, Zhuang Rui stopped, covered in sweat. He had written down more than sixty pieces of rough jade in his notebook. These pieces ranged from bean green to glassy jade.

Zhuang Rui planned to hand over these labels to his father-in-law in a few days; otherwise, it wouldn't make sense to have looked at so many in just one morning.

"Xiao Rui, what are you doing here?"

The sealed bidding area was larger than the open bidding area. Just as Zhuang Rui was about to finish his inspection of the sealed bidding area and walked out from a row of raw stones, he ran into Qin Haoran.

"Dad, didn't you say you wanted me to take a look at these materials?"

As Zhuang Rui spoke, he closed his notebook. He couldn't give the data he had just compiled to Qin Haoran right away.

"Hey, I told you to come over in a few days when you have time, not that you have to come now. Hurry up, go to the open bidding area and pick out a piece of jade. If you lose to Old Tang tonight, you'll lose face big time..."

Qin Haoran and Old Tang have been friends for many years, but these words prove that he still favors his son-in-law.

Zhuang Rui laughed upon hearing this: "Hehe, Dad, I'm just a newbie, it's not a loss of face if I lose. By the way, those pieces of jade you have aren't very good, don't waste your time, I'll pick out a few for you later..."

"Alright, alright, hurry up and go pick out the raw stones..."

Qin Haoran waved his hand, but the expressions of the appraisers behind him were not very good, because the rough stones that Zhuang Rui mentioned were all selected by them.

"Brother Zhuang, Brother Zhuang!"

Just as Zhuang Rui was talking to his father-in-law, Peng Fei's loud voice rang out from afar.

Seeing Peng Fei and Li Zhen covered in sweat, Zhuang Rui asked curiously, "What's wrong? What are you two doing in such a hurry?"

Peng Fei wiped his sweat and said excitedly, "Hey, Brother Zhuang, there's a betting place outside, betting on whether you and Grandpa Tang will win tonight..."

Peng Fei and Li Zhen were bored and wandered around until they reached the entrance. They naturally discovered the gambling den of Boss Jin and Boss Guo. At this moment, the two bosses had already collected a total of 50 million in gambling funds.

Mr. Jin received less betting money, only about 20 million, which shows that everyone still has faith in Mr. Tang. With his large family and business empire, he doesn't care much about 20 or 30 million.

However, Mr. Guo's face was not very pleasant. He used to be in the auto parts business, but he got involved in the jade gambling circle halfway through, and he didn't know much about this circle.

Moreover, Mr. Guo's assets are considered fixed assets, and his total net worth is only forty or fifty million, but he has received as much as thirty million in gambling funds. If Zhuang Rui loses, this guy will probably have to go home and sell his house and land to pay it back.

"Holy crap, I received so much money?"

Zhuang Rui was also shocked when he heard Peng Fei's words. This bet of 50,000 had actually collected tens of millions of bets. The winner no longer needed to gamble on stones. The profit from gambling on stones was not necessarily that great.

However, Zhuang Rui didn't consider that the number of participants in this auction reached the peak of all previous Myanmar jade auctions, with a total of more than 3,600 people. If 1,000 people participated in the gambling, the amount would be as high as 50 million.

"Hehe, my brother and I each placed a bet, and we bet on you to win, Zhuang..."

Peng Fei said with a smile, "When we got there, those two were discussing packing up their stall. If thousands of people had placed bets, they probably wouldn't have been able to afford to lose..."

Mr. Jin and Mr. Guo were in a bit of a dilemma. If more than 3,000 people got involved, even Mr. Jin couldn't afford it. So the two were discussing whether to stop the betting period before lunch.

"Hehe, it seems I still can't lose?" Zhuang Rui laughed upon hearing this, shook his head, and headed towards the open bidding area.

What started as a private conversation between Zhuang Rui and Old Tang unexpectedly escalated into a betting scheme, which made Zhuang Rui take it more seriously. After all, he couldn't let down the guys who had bet on him to win!

Peng Fei followed behind Zhuang Rui, muttering incessantly, "Brother Zhuang, you can't lose! Li Zhen even borrowed the money from me to gamble. If you lose, you'll have to pay for it..."

"Get out of here, do whatever you want, don't follow me..." Zhuang Rui glared at Peng Fei in annoyance. Peng Fei was fearless, but he was a little afraid of Zhuang Rui, so he pulled Li Zhen away in a sorry state.

Upon arriving at the open bidding area, Zhuang Rui saw Tang Lao and his two disciples squatting in front of a rough jade stone, examining it carefully. He couldn't help but smile. He then walked through several bidding areas, starting with the rough jade stone area marked 30,000 and looking down.

Although the quality of the rough stones at this year's Myanmar jade auction was somewhat poor, it's still not a big problem to pick out a few good pieces from tens of thousands of rough stones. Moreover, with so many pieces, there's absolutely no chance of encountering the same quality as Mr. Tang.

Zhuang Rui examines raw materials very quickly. He doesn't linger in front of ordinary green or icy jadeite at all, and in half an hour, he has examined more than a thousand raw stones.

"This... I'm afraid we can't win..."

Zhuang Rui looked at the records in his notebook. Among the more than 1,000 rough stones, there were three high-ice jade pieces and one blue-water jade piece, which was a top-quality jade material for making bracelets.

However, Zhuang Rui was a little uneasy about thinking he could beat Master Tang with just these few pieces of material.

Chapter 970 The Jade King (Part Two)

Although jade gambling is shrouded in mystery, and there's an ancient saying that even immortals can't judge a piece of jade, it's not entirely without clues once you understand the nature of the stone.

Someone like Mr. Tang, who has formal training and has spent his entire life dealing with jadeite rough, can deduce the formation conditions of a rough stone from its outer skin, and thus determine whether there is jadeite inside.

Therefore, Zhuang Rui felt uneasy about beating Master Tang based solely on the few pieces of jade he had seen. Moreover, those pieces were all performing well, and there would likely be many bidders, which didn't quite align with Zhuang Rui's expectations.

According to Zhuang Rui's idea, at least one piece of glass-type jadeite should be produced to ensure a winning position. However, glass-type jadeite is usually hard to come by, and it's possible that none of the more than 10,000 rough stones up for auction today will be found.

Fortunately, Zhuang Rui had only looked at about one-tenth of the material so far, and there was still a lot left. After making a mark on the blue-green material, Zhuang Rui continued to examine it, but he did not find any better jadeite rough stones until lunchtime.

During lunch, Qin Haoran noticed that his son-in-law was in low spirits and asked, "What's wrong, Xiao Rui? Didn't you find any good materials?"

"There's a piece of blue-green jadeite, top-quality material for making bracelets, but its quality doesn't reach the glassy level, so I'm afraid it won't be able to beat Old Tang's..."

Even in front of his own people, Zhuang Rui didn't hide his competitive spirit. Anyway, this should be the last time he participated in the jade auction. He wanted to leave a legend for future generations, a legend that no one could surpass.

Therefore, Zhuang Rui didn't even glance at the mere blue-water icy jadeite. What he was thinking about was the top-quality yellow jadeite in Old Master Gu's hands. If it appeared at this public auction, it would undoubtedly be the king of jadeite.

"You...you brat, aren't you satisfied with icy blue jadeite?"

Qin Haoran stared at Zhuang Rui with wide eyes, stretched out his hand, and said, "I'll take that material even if you don't want it. Give me the label number, and I'll go bid on it later..."

Blue-green jadeite bracelets with floating patterns are especially sought after in the market and are the easiest to sell. Therefore, Qin Haoran, disregarding the fact that his son-in-law had his eye on them, immediately and without hesitation took the bracelet with the number.

Zhuang Rui shook his head with a wry smile and didn't say anything. He really didn't believe that he couldn't find a single piece he was satisfied with out of tens of thousands of rough stones. After finishing his meal, Zhuang Rui didn't rest and went straight to the open bidding area.

With only three hours left until the bidding opened at 3:30 pm, Zhuang Rui felt a sense of urgency and sped up his work. In just over an hour, he had examined more than 6,000 rough stones.

"Damn it, have all the glass-type jadeite been mined out?"

Zhuang Rui was sweating profusely. He gulped down several mouthfuls of mineral water. Among these thousands of pieces of material, there were many high-ice jadeite, but he still couldn't find the glass-type material that he was looking for.

This made Zhuang Rui very critical of this jadeite auction. The overall quality of the raw stones was incomparable to the one he had participated in before. On that occasion, Zhuang Rui found three pieces of glass-type jadeite alone, and they were three different colors of glass-type jadeite.

Actually, this is not the fault of the Myanmar organizing committee. In Myanmar today, the old mines of jadeite have been almost completely exhausted, and the new mines, due to insufficient formation time, make glass-type jadeite quite rare.

This has led to a surge in demand for glass-type jadeite jewelry in recent years, with prices rising continuously. Moreover, the glass-type jadeite jewelry appearing in jewelry stores is almost always colorless.

High-quality or bright green glass-type jewelry is mostly found at auctions, where it is purchased for collection and rarely circulates in the market.

...

"Xiao Zhuang, how's it going? Have you found any pieces you like?"

Unbeknownst to him, Zhuang Rui had unexpectedly met up with Old Tang, who was observing the rough stone from the other side. He had been focused on the stone until Old Tang greeted him, at which point Zhuang Rui realized what was happening.

"Old Tang?"

Zhuang Rui was taken aback for a moment, then said, "Hey, I've only been looking at semi-gambling jade, but I've taken a liking to a few pieces. What about you, Mr. Tang?"

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Old Tang was relieved. He had been wondering how Zhuang Rui could walk all this way without even bending over.

Old Tang has been gambling on jadeite for decades, and he has never seen such a way of appraising jadeite rough. After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, he realized that Zhuang Rui had already selected the material.

"The old man looked at a few pieces too, but he wasn't sure. He's getting old, after all, not as good as you young people..."

Although Old Tang spoke modestly, there was a hint of pride on his face, suggesting that he was quite satisfied with the pieces of material he had selected.

"Teacher, you just said that piece of jade hasn't been seen in several public auctions, how come..."

While Master Tang was being modest, one of his disciples couldn't help but speak up, glancing at Zhuang Rui with undisguised provocation.

Old Tang glanced at his disciple beside him, shook his head, and said, "These jadeite rough stones are ever-changing. Before they're cut open, no one can say for sure what's inside. Little Su, don't talk nonsense..."

Zhuang Rui was a little frustrated. Judging from the old man's confident demeanor, he must have already selected a suitable raw stone, while he hadn't found one yet. Was he really going to lose the competition today?

"Xiao Zhuang, go sit in the shed. I've been watching all day, and my old bones are starting to feel the strain..."

Old Tang rubbed his back. He was almost 70 years old, and after standing in the scorching sun all day, plus the mental strain of observing the raw stones, his complexion was really not good.

"Alright, Mr. Tang, you don't look too well. I have some Ren Dan here, please take a few..."

Because of Lao Wu's sudden death yesterday, Hu Rong gave everyone some medicine to relieve the heat when they came out this morning. Zhuang Rui, being of good health, naturally didn't need it and kept it in his pocket.

"Okay, okay, I was just saying I wanted to buy some yesterday. It's so inconvenient to buy things in Myanmar, you can't even find a bottle of Tiger Balm..."

Without any ceremony, Old Tang took the medicine from Zhuang Rui, poured a few pills into his mouth, and swallowed them without water. His disciple rushed into the shed first and poured his teacher a glass of water.

Zhuang Rui followed Tang Lao into the shed, but before entering, he saw a large rock about his height standing beside it and couldn't help but say, "The quality of the rough stones at this year's auction is really poor..."

"The piece of material you're talking about?"

When Tang Lao saw Zhuang Rui staring at the rough stone by the shed, he couldn't help but chuckle. This piece of material was more like a rock than a jadeite rough stone, because it didn't have any characteristics of a jadeite rough stone on its surface.

Generally, rough stones containing jadeite will show some signs on their surface. However, this stone, which is over 1.8 meters tall and more than 1 meter wide, has a very smooth surface and does not have any characteristics of rough jadeite. It looks more like a whole piece of rock.

If this stone were truly a jadeite rough, it would be a behemoth. However, placed here, it seems somewhat out of place with the surrounding stones. If it weren't for the sign next to the stone, Zhuang Rui would have thought it was just an ordinary stone.

"Yes, the organizing committee is just trying to fool people by bringing out this kind of material."

Zhuang Rui glanced at the price tag on the stone and said, "The starting bid is a whopping four million euros! Do they really think the money in our country just grows on trees?"

"There's nothing we can do about it. The jade trade can only rely on imports from Myanmar. Perhaps in a few decades, the jade we're buying today will all be antiques. But by then, I won't be able to see it..."

As Old Tang spoke, he became somewhat emotional. He had dealt with jade all his life, and the thought that in a few years, there would be no more jade to be mined in the world inevitably made him feel a little down.

"That's right. Not only jadeite, but also Hetian jade in our country has been almost completely mined out. When I spoke with Tian Bo on the phone a while ago, he even... um?"

As Zhuang Rui was speaking, he habitually used his spiritual energy to circle the "rock" next to the shed, and suddenly froze, forgetting what he was about to say.

"What's wrong, Xiao Zhuang? Lao Tian and I have been friends for decades. Just tell me what he wants to say, and I won't spread rumors..."

Old Tang thought Zhuang Rui was a junior and wouldn't dare to speak carelessly to his elders, so he stopped talking. However, he didn't notice the hint of surprise that flashed in Zhuang Rui's eyes.

"Well, it's nothing. In recent years, the government has started to control the excavation of Hetian jade. Uncle Tian said it's a good thing, so that future generations can have something to remember it by..."

Zhuang Rui was chatting absentmindedly with Old Tang, but he was actually very excited because when the spiritual energy seeped into that huge "mountain rock" just now, Zhuang Rui felt an extremely pure and cool aura.

Zhuang Rui had experienced this feeling several times before, on the imperial green jadeite he had acquired and on that top-grade yellow jadeite.

Zhuang Rui was excited and afraid that Tang Lao would notice something amiss, so he stood up and said, "Tang Lao, please rest for a while, I'll go out for a walk..."

Zhuang Rui had only sensed it slightly and hadn't been able to see what kind of jade was hidden in this "rock." His heart was in turmoil, and he no longer had the heart to chat with Old Tang.

Old Tang didn't suspect anything. He waved his hand and said, "Alright, Xiao Zhuang, go ahead. When I was young, I once spent three days and three nights straight looking at rough stones at the jade gambling market. It's good to be young..."

Zhuang Rui apologized and left the pavilion. He stopped in a corner of the pavilion, squatted down next to a rough stone, focused his spiritual energy, and looked at the "rock".